

Thorndwell, J. H.

THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST,
THE
TYPE AND MODEL OF MISSIONARY
EFFORT.

The Sacrifice of Christ, the Type and Model of Missionary Effort.

A SERMON

PREACHED BY APPOINTMENT OF THE

BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS,

BEFORE THE

General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church,

IN THE

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NEW YORK.

SABBATH, MAY 18, 1856.

BY THE

REV. JAMES H. THORNWELL, D.D.,

PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, COLUMBIA, S. C.

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“THEREFORE doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.”—JOHN x. 17, 18.

THIS passage, so rich, is yet so awful and mysterious, that it is not without fear and trembling I have ventured to make it the subject of discussion. It pierces the depths of eternity, and lays bare the counsel of peace betwixt the Father and the Son. The “commandment” of which it speaks is nothing more nor less than the commission to the Son to be the Saviour of the world—a commission to which allusion is frequently made in the Scriptures, under the emphatic designation of the will of God. “For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me. And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which He hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of Him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth in Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.” To the same “commandment,” or commission concerning the redemption of men, the Psalmist refers, when he introduces the Son as exclaiming: “Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart;” and it is to the infinite satisfaction which Jesus took in the execution of the trust, that He Himself refers, in the memorable

words: "my meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work." This is the will which was supreme with Him in the garden of Gethsemane, and nerved His soul for the horrors of the cross: the will for which He was born, for which He died, for which He rose again, for which He lives and reigns—the rule and measure, in a single word, of the mediatorial economy.

What is particularly remarkable in the text is the light which it throws upon the nature of the trust. Though styled a will, a commandment, a commission, it is not so much an authoritative law, as the accepted condition of a voluntary compact. It binds, not by virtue of a right to command, but by virtue of a consent to obey. The Saviour appears not as a subject, but a Prince; an equal party to a high and sovereign treaty. He claims complete jurisdiction of Himself. "I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself." These words bear the burden of the Godhead; no creature could sustain their weight. Jesus here asserts to Himself the essential independence which separates contingent from necessary being, and appropriates that intrinsic immortality which belongs exclusively to Him who lifts His hand to heaven, and says, I live forever. They are words which none can consistently employ, but He who is God over all and blessed forever more, and may, therefore, be accepted as an unequivocal testimony, that as the Father hath life in Himself, so by the mysterious communication of His essence, hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself. The absolute sovereignty which Jesus assumes to Himself can be reconciled with no hypothesis short of the acknowledgment that He is the blessed and only potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The natural import of His language is: "I have received a commission from my Father, not as a dependent subject, in whom it would be treason to have an independent thought, but as a free and an equal party, whose only law is in itself; and though it is not possible that there can be any discordancy betwixt the Father and myself, yet the harmony is not obedience but concurrence, the result not of a sense of duty, but of unity of nature. My acceptance of the trust is not the necessary allegiance of a creature, but the voluntary consent of a sovereign. The redemption of the world is not a task imposed upon me, as the expression of a superior will, which leaves me no liberty to decline, but a work cheerfully assumed, deriving all its obligation from my own cordial assent. It is not a command which, as a servant, I am bound to obey, but a treaty to which, in the depths of eternity, I have

plighted my princely faith." This paraphrase which I have ventured to put into the mouth of the Saviour, accords precisely with the prevailing tenour of the Scriptures. You cannot fail to recall that exquisite passage in the Psalms already recited, in which, when sacrifices and offerings were pronounced unavailing, and among all the myriads of creatures none could be found to expiate guilt or ransom from the grave; when from the tallest seraph to the humblest beast, all were alike unable to take away sin, the Son is introduced as saying from the fulness of His own heart, and the exuberance of His own grace, Lo, I come. He did not wait to be commanded. The purpose which heaved in the Father's bosom, swelled in His own. It was the common love of a common nature; as free, as cordial, as sovereign in the consent of the Son, as in the original conception and proposal of the Father. The whole transaction was a covenant of grace—the only covenant which God ever made in which the parties were equal—the only covenant in which there was no penalty—in which the sovereign faith of the agents was ample security for the fulfilment of the terms. The commission having been accepted, the execution of it necessarily involved relations, in which He would have to become a subject, and render the obedience of a creature to law. But the act which introduced Him into these relations, the first step in the stupendous enterprise, was sovereign, free, independent. He was the master of Himself.

The text asserts that precisely because He was the master of Himself, the disposition which He made of Himself rendered Him, in a peculiar sense, the object of the Father's regard. *Therefore* doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again. This passage is very remarkable; it seems to intimate that, in these acts of Jesus, the laying down and the taking of His life again, there was something so glorious as to comprehend all His claims to attention within itself; a brightness which hid the perfections of His nature and being displayed in other works, as the splendour of the sun conceals the lustre of the stars. The other glories of His name had no glory in this respect by reason of the glory that excelleth. It is a sublime tribute to the death and resurrection of Jesus, that they are singled out as the special grounds of Divine complacency and delight. They include within themselves every other motive of love. Here the rays of His excellence are concentrated, and a perfect image is reflected. Here the Father beholds Him in a work which expresses the fulness of His being, which gives scope for all the energies, and illustrates all the perfections of His nature; which declares Him to be the Son of God

with power. Here His Deity appears in full-orbed radiance as Deity in action. Nowhere else can the Son be seen in all the intensity of His glory, and well may He say: therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. My brethren, if I can, in any measure, extract the spirit of this passage, and present it before you in the light in which it has impressed my own mind, I shall not need to say a word in furtherance of the cause which I have been appointed to plead. It will then speak for itself, and its appeals to the Christian heart will be as resistless and constraining as the love of Christ. The point to which I wish to call your attention is the connection indicated by the illative "therefore," betwixt the laying down of the life of Jesus and the taking of it again, and the peculiar complacency and approbation of the Father; how it is that these acts of His so illustriously display His glory, and absorb within themselves all the grounds of the Father's love.

In estimating these events we must obviously penetrate beyond the surface. As the transaction is exhibited to the eye of sense, there is nothing in the death of Jesus to justify the claim to a complete jurisdiction of Himself, so clearly asserted in the text. He seems to be the passive and helpless victim of violence and hate. He was taken and by-wicked hands crucified and slain. And to look merely at the circumstances of His trial, as they lie upon the face of the record, one would be inclined to suspect that there was much more pretext for the jeering exultation, He saved others, Himself He cannot save, than for the lofty prerogative of sovereignty: my life is my own; I lay it down of myself: no man taketh it from me. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. It is evident that there must be more here than meets the eye—an interior work, in which Jesus Himself was the actor, of which the Roman soldiers and the cross were but the outward instruments. The phraseology of the text puts it beyond doubt that while Jewish malignity was consummating its scheme of disappointment and revenge, Christ also was engaged in an enterprise of very different character, in which He could be truly said to lay down His life of Himself. The scenes in which man figured were but the outer court of the transaction; an august mystery was enshrined within. Significant intimations of something awful and sublime, in which Jesus was conspicuously the agent, veiled beneath the tragedy which human infatuation was enacting, were afforded in the display of more than mortal power which preceded the arrest, when the band that came to apprehend Him "went backward and fell to the ground," and in

His own distinct recognition of the cup, which, in pursuance of the will He had undertaken to execute, the Father had given Him to drink. We here see that His submission was voluntary—that man had no power over Him, except as it was given by Himself. At the very time when He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth, He could have prayed to the Father and received an army of more than twelve legions of angels for His rescue. He had but to speak, and every arm uplifted against Him would have fallen palsied by the side of its possessor. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled, that thus it must be; the commandment He received from the Father must be accomplished—His covenant engagements must be kept. He gave Himself up to men, and while the scourge, the thorns and the nails, the ostensible instruments of His death, were doing their office, there was passing in the mysteries of His own being, a stupendous transaction which filled heaven with wonder and hell with dismay, that laying down of His life, as its sovereign proprietor, which, when adequately understood, extorts the confession, truly this man was the Son of God, and removes all occasion of surprise that, therefore, the Father should love Him. It were an idle mockery of language to find nothing more here than patient submission to insult and injury; and no martyrdom for truth, however sublime and noble, could ever sustain the weight and intensity of the inference, Therefore doth my Father love me. As Jesus has no rival in His Father's heart, we must obviously seek a sense which will leave Him without a rival in the transaction which justifies the Father's love; and as the point of admiration is not so much what He endures, but what He does, we must seek a meaning that shall represent Him rather as a heroic actor than an humble and uncomplaining sufferer.

What, then, is the nature of the act implied in the laying down of His life? I shall not scruple to assert, whatever other interpretations the language may be capable of bearing, that it is here to be taken in a sacrificial sense. It is this which distinguishes the death of Jesus from the death of every other man. He made His soul an offering for sin. A body was expressly prepared for Him that He might, through the Eternal Spirit, present an offering which should really achieve what it was not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could accomplish, the taking away of sins. Interpreted in this sense, the apparent contradictions of the text are beautifully harmonized. He lays down His life; He takes it again, and is as truly alive when He lays it down, as when He takes it up. All this is readily explained when we remember

that as a Priest, He ever lives, and that the efficacy of His work is dependent upon the circumstance that He is incapable of death. His Divine Person is essentially immortal, and that assumption to Itself of the entire nature of man, by virtue of which He becomes a Priest, involves a union which can never be disturbed. He can never cease to be God and man in two distinct natures and one Person forever. He is a Priest after the power of an endless life. The victim which He offered was His human nature, which was susceptible of death by the separation of its parts, though the union of neither part could be dissolved with the Divine Son. Here, then, the Priest as living, lays down a life, upon which death may seize without affecting the integrity of His own being. He lays it down and He takes it again. Both are His own acts, and the inconsistency of attributing to the dead the properties of the living, is fully resolved. The language, indeed, seems to be accommodated to what we are studiously taught in the Epistle to the Hebrews concerning the sacrifice of Christ, and no other exposition—none, at least, which divests Him of either nature—can extricate His words from absurdity or paradox. How He could die and yet be ever alive—how, as dead, He could resume a life which supposes Him not to be dead—these are contradictions which can only be explained by the mystery of the incarnation, in which the union of the natures is maintained, each in its integrity, without confusion, amalgamation or mixture. The Priest lives, the victim dies—the Priest is the actor, the victim the sufferer.

The death of Jesus being distinctively a sacrifice, the question arises what there is in this aspect of it which entitles Him to such preëminent consideration. It is not a question concerning redemption, as an objective work, or an outward manifestation of the Divine glory, but concerning the subjective states of the Redeemer, the moral influences under which He accomplished it. The spirit of the agent, and not the result or tendencies of the work, determines His own worth. The text implies that the motives which animated Jesus were in the highest degree meritorious; that great as his achievement unquestionably was, He Himself was still greater; and whatever moral grandeur it possesses, either in illustrating the perfections of God, or ameliorating the prospects of man, is to be attributed to the moral grandeur of Himself. The agent dignifies the work. Now, in what did the moral greatness of Jesus, as exemplified in His death, consist?

To elucidate this point, all that is necessary is distinctly to apprehend the nature of a sacrifice, which, as to its matter, may be compendiously defined as the satisfaction of the penalty of the law, and as to its form or

specific difference, an act of worship. Guilt expiated by an office of devotion,—this embraces the prominent conceptions. Hence it always implies a Priest, who presents the victim and celebrates the worship. In the death of Christ, therefore, if we would attain to a just conception of the moral excellence reflected by it, we must consider alike the matter and the form—the judicial sentence, and the spirit of religion in which the offering was laid upon the altar. Let us then contemplate, for a moment, the form of his death as an act of worship, evolve the elements of piety which prompted it, and measure their extent and intensity by the trial to which they were subjected.

1. The moral grandeur of the death of Jesus is not a little enhanced, when it is apprehended in its distinctive character as an act of worship. If we consider it exclusively in the light of a judicial sentence, and detach from the Saviour those active sentiments of piety and religion which make him a doer rather than a sufferer, we may understand the principles of moral government which underlie the atonement, but we shall fail to appreciate the dignity and glory of Jesus. It is not right to consider Him as the helpless victim of inexorable wrath, and all the imputations upon the goodness and clemency of God, which the malice of the human heart has made His vicarious punishment the pretext of suggesting, are at once dispelled when we enter into His own mind, and see the spirit of devotion in which He presented His soul as an offering for sin. His satisfaction is not merely the ground upon which others are at liberty to approach and adore the Divine perfections—it is itself a stupendous act of prayer and an amazing tribute of praise. We dare not entertain the thought, even for an instant, that the Father is harsh or vindictive, or that a cloud obscures the benevolence of His nature, when the very circumstances which are most revolting in the tragedy of Calvary are elements of a worship which the Son delighted to render and felt that the Father was glorious in accepting. Considered as an act of worship, there is a majestic awe—a moral sublimity thrown around the death of Jesus, which fails to be impressed when attention is exclusively confined to the legal principles which made it indispensable to the pardon of the guilty. It is invested with a sacredness which makes us pause and adore. Never was there such a doxology as when Jesus died, and the whole work of redemption is a grand litany which has no parallel in the history of the universe. There can be no wonder that the Father should love the Son. Such worshippers are not to be dismissed from the sanctuary, nor such homage lightly esteemed. Never, never was there displayed before, and never, never will there be

displayed again, such piety as that which burned in the bosom of Jesus, when He laid down His life of Himself.

2. This will appear from considering the principles involved, or those moral elements without which the form of worship degenerates into an idle mockery. The internal feelings of the Priest must correspond to the external significance of the act. His offering must express the spontaneous sentiments of the heart, or the whole service becomes an empty parade of hypocrisy. Now what are the motives which alone could be adequate to prompt to such an undertaking as the death of Christ, and to prompt to it specifically in the light of a solemn office of religion. The first most obviously is an intense sense and admiration of the holiness and justice of God, and a corresponding sense and detestation of the sinfulness of sin. This is the very language of a sacrifice, considered in its matter as the expiation of guilt, and in its form as an act of worship. If there could have been a cheaper redemption for the race, if sin could have been pardoned at a less expense of suffering and of blood, if any other law could have given righteousness, consistently with the integrity of the Divine character, we can hardly conceive that Jesus should have consented to experience gratuitous pain; and much less can we comprehend how He could have rendered a tribute of worship to the Father on the ground of an exaction which cannot be vindicated from the charge of cruelty. The strongest argument to me for the necessity of the atonement is that Jesus died in the spirit of devotion. When I consider His soul as a pious offering,—then reflect that He celebrates the grace and the condescension of God in accepting the gift; when I consider the extent and severity of His sufferings,—and then remember that all were endured to express to the universe His sense of the Divine holiness, I ask no more; I am satisfied that thus it must be—that without the shedding of this precious blood, there could be no remission. So intense was His conviction that His death was indispensable to the righteous pardon of the guilty, that He seems to have coveted the cross, and to have been straitened for His baptism of blood. He could not brook the thought that man should be saved at the peril of the Divine glory; and, whatever His Father's honour demanded, He was prepared to render, at any cost of self-denial to Himself. Our finite minds are incapable of conceiving the extent to which the principle of holiness, the principle of supreme regard for the character of God energized within Him, when He made His soul an offering for sin; and when I figure to myself the scene, and undertake to penetrate into the workings and emotions of the Saviour's heart, I am irresistibly impressed with the conviction that nothing short of the Divine nature could

have been the dwelling-place of such zeal. I see not so much an admiration of the holiness of God, as the energies of that holiness itself. I see the Father reflected in the Son. The piety of the Priest flows from a fountain of inexhaustible fulness. I feel that death was to Jesus not so much a penalty inflicted, as an offering accepted—rather a favour than a curse. It was His commentary upon the Divine honour, and contemplated in this light, all that was revolting and terrible; His groans, amazement, agony, and horror; His strong crying and tears, lose their harshness, except as marking the malignity of sin, and become expressions of love and piety and zeal. I forget the sufferer in the actor, and enter into that awful reverence for God which invests the cross with the sanctities of worship, and converts its shame into glory. I feel the moral sublimity of the scene. The beauty of holiness gilds its terrors. I am at no loss to understand that the Father should love the Son, because He laid down His life of Himself.

But sacrifice expresses, with equal perspicuity, the sentiment of pity for man. Here is the mystery of grace. It is not strange that God should be loved with all the fulness of the Saviour's being; but it is strange that our fallen race should be made the object of a condescension which our capacities are incompetent to measure. The philosopher finds mysteries in nature. His inquiries begin with the incomprehensible, and end by attributing an equal wonder to all the phenomena of life. The department of grace is, in this respect, a perfect counterpart to that of nature. All is wonderful; but that which is most amazing, which communicates least with any ordinary measures of probability, is God's love to the sinner. This is the starting point in the scheme of redemption. The whole necessity of Priesthood arises from the miseries of man, as viewed by a nature at once supremely holy and good. Sacrifice is the combined expression of righteousness and grace. God *so* loved the world, is the explanation of one mystery by another equally incomprehensible. The charity for man, which sacrifice obviously expresses, was conspicuous in the whole career of Jesus. His bosom glowed with love. He had compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way; and such was the ardour of His zeal, such the intense vigour of His philanthropy, that no ingratitude or cruelty could quench its fires. Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do, is a key which unlocks the secrets of His heart.

3. These two elements, love to God and love to man, which His death, considered as a sacrifice, expresses, constitute the essence of virtue. They are the principles into which every form of moral excellence may be ulti-

mately resolved. The extent to which they pervade the character and regulate the life,—the degree, in other words, in which they are possessed, determines the moral worth of the possessor. This degree is ascertained by the severity of the trials to which they are exposed. In the sacrifice of Jesus, therefore, we are to look for the measure of the intensity of His principles; we are to study His character in the light of sufferings. We are to learn how much He loved God and how much He pitied man from the cost of His piety and philanthropy to His own soul. Tried by this standard, He stands without a rival. To appreciate the greatness of His virtue, we must bear in mind that the occasion on which it was so triumphantly displayed was one which might have been avoided. He was under no previous obligation to become a Priest and a victim. He might have cherished His sentiments of sympathy and love for our race, and enjoyed forever the communion of the Father, without subjecting Himself to the pains and privations of a mortal state. The glory of His nature might have been content with those exhibitions of its power which nature and providence unfold, when they reveal the ever-blessed God. His virtue might have reposed in undisturbed beatitude. There was no claim upon Him to empty Himself of His Divine glory, and to be found in fashion as a man. He was master of Himself. Nothing but the sublimity of His principles, the Godlike greatness of His heart, brought Him to the earth, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Neither, again, was it a momentary enthusiasm, or sudden ebullition of heroic ardour. The principles from which He acted were the settled principles of His soul—they were the life of His life. Had they failed, or suffered abatement at any stage in the progress of His work, the worship would have been adulterated, and the victim blemished. His zeal for God never cooled; His charity for man never lessened. What grandeur do these considerations throw around the character of Jesus! Can there be a loftier height of virtue, an intenser energy of holiness? All creatures, here, with their superficial trials, retire into the shade. Jesus stands unrivalled and alone the possessor of a virtue which none can understand, and none can adequately love, but He who can fathom the deep things of God.

“There is reason to believe,” says Robert Hall, “that in a moral, that is, in the highest point of view, the Redeemer, in the depth of His humiliation, was a greater object of attention and approbation, in the eye of His father, than when He sat in His original glory at God’s right hand—the one being His natural, the other peculiarly His moral elevation.” His virtue was put to the strongest trial which omnipotence could exact.

The work on which He entered, and which, however His humanity sometimes quailed and trembled, the Priest prosecuted with unabated ardour and consistency of purpose, is a work whose difficulties can only be estimated by Him who can take the length and breadth of God's hatred to sin. The tragedy of Calvary was no seenie exhibition of sietitious terror and distress. The victim was roasted with fire. Behold the man! and be astonished at the spectacle. "His visage is so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men." Tell me, ye that pass by, is there any sorrow like unto His sorrow? My brethren, this is holy ground, and we must take the shoes from our feet. We can only admire and adore. There never was witnessed such a scene in the universe before—the infinite holiness and goodness of God sounded to their depths—the whole moral energy of the Godhead in action. Well might the angels stoop from their heights and desire to look into this mystery—well might there be silence, the silence of profound admiration in heaven—well might the sun be darkened, the earth convulsed, and the very dead startled, when moral elements were at work on a scale of infinite grandeur, before which the earth, the sea and the sky, and all material things, dwindle into littleness as mirrors of the glory of God. When I contemplate Calvary and comprehend the spirit of the agent who there laid down His life—when I see Jesus putting into action, and trying to the utmost, the whole essence of virtue, I ask for no other explanation: the text is solved—therefore doth my Father love me.

The text, it will be noticed, connects the love of the Father not only with the laying down, but with the taking again of the life of Jesus. From what has been said, the extraordinary merit of the first may be readily perceived, but the influence of the latter consideration is not so obvious. That the resurrection of the Saviour, as the proof of the completeness of His satisfaction, is essential to the justification of the sinner, is manifest from the nature of the case; that it was indispensable to the discharge of the remaining office of His Priesthood, intercession before God, and to His entrance into His kingdom, is equally apparent. But these are not the points to which the text alludes. It is represented as having an influence, not upon His work, but upon the feelings of the Father to His person. The doctrine is, that the love of which He is the object on account of His death demands His resurrection as equally essential. His death could not, in other words, make Him the subject of Divine complacency and delight, if that death were regarded as final. Understood in this light, it enhances the tribute to the personal glory of the Saviour. Such were the transcendent merits of His virtue in the laying down of His life, that it would be an imputation upon the Divine

character, to permit such an exhibition to pass without a conspicuous reward. The thought would be intolerable, that such a life should hopelessly perish from the very greatness of its worth. The nobleness of the sacrifice demands a proportionate compensation. It was not the heroism of necessity or duty, it was a spontaneous outburst of the most exalted magnanimity, for which there was no call but its own unrivalled greatness. Creatures may do well, but no mere creature can deserve. But here there was merit, and merit of the loftiest character. God's government would have been wanting in essential justice, and the Divine resources been defective, if such virtue could have existed without the opportunity of signalizing its worth by appropriate rewards. It must be honoured, or there would have been a blank, a chasm, a dark spot in the moral administration of heaven. Jesus, therefore, must rise again, not merely for His people's sake, but for His own name; and when we read the magnificent honours which are heaped upon Him, we feel that they are fairly His due. He deserves to be exalted and to have a name which is above every name—that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father. We feel that He is entitled to be made Head over all things, and to have the power not only of presenting His Church without spot or wrinkle before the presence of the Father, but of collecting the angels under His headship, and extending His grace through all the realms of intelligent being, so as finally to destroy the possibility of sin. This is the grand consummation, and it is a beautiful and glorious reward. He is to finish transgression and to make an end of sin—to redeem and sanctify the Church, and to confirm in holiness every order of unfallen being,—so that when His work is finished, and His glory complete, the intelligent universe by virtue of one grand enterprise of triumphant virtue, shall be bound inviolably to the throne of God. There shall be no more sin—no more sorrow—no more darkness. Holiness is to be the eternal distinction of the creatures, because He who is in the midst of the throne is the centre and source of their stability, and their security is the tribute which the Father pays to His transcendent excellence.

I have now briefly and imperfectly developed the force of the illation in the declaration of the text—therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again. Jesus appears as a worshipper of God burning with zeal for the Divine glory and compassion for the souls of men, and performing an act of homage which concentrates in itself every principle of virtue, and displays the energies of infinite holiness in intensest action. The cross is the only spot in all the

universe of God, where the word *merit* should ever be pronounced; and when we contemplate Him who hangs there, and enter into the moral import of the deed—when we rise to the comprehension of all that is included in a sacrifice for sin—when we measure the length and breadth, the height and depth of that moral heroism which dared to undertake it, we want no other argument—we feel at once that Jesus is Divine. The impulse to worship is irresistible. We cannot help falling down like Thomas and exclaiming, My Lord and my God. There is no glory that we can give to God higher than the glory which our moral nature constrains us to attribute to the High Priest of our Profession. These were the sentiments of Jehovah Himself. He loved the Son, because He perceived in the Son the brightness of His own image. None could be capable of such an act as the offering of Jesus, but one who was God over all and blessed forever more. Such merit which we feel not to be disproportioned to the reward of universal dominion and for which our moral sentiments demand a compensation that tax the resources of omnipotence—such merit it were blasphemy to ascribe to a creature. It blazes through the universe in Divine characters. It proclaims its own nature. It stands out unrivalled and alone—and if it be not the property of God, we must cease to ascribe to Him absolute supremacy of excellence. For myself, I am bold to say that the moral character of Jesus shuts me up to the belief of His divinity. There is no brightness in heaven which can transcend the glory of the cross, and if there be a being greater and mightier than Jesus, there is assuredly none that is purer, holier or better. He fills the love and admiration of my soul.

The application of this subject to the question of missions need not detain us long. It has grown into a proverb that the spirit of missions is essentially the spirit of the Gospel, but the grounds of their identity are in many cases so imperfectly apprehended, that many who call themselves Christians are not ashamed to slumber over the necessities of the heathen, while others are impelled to exertion by motives which have little analogy to the temper and example of Christ. The proposition, however, is true, and it is of the last importance that the Church should be aroused to a full conviction of its truth. Zeal for the propagation of the Gospel, upon proper principles and for proper ends, is the highest exhibition of Christian integrity. If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. This is true of the Spirit which He exemplified as a Priest. We also are made Kings and Priests unto God. As our union with Him introduces us by adoption into the family of God, so we share an office bearing somewhat the same relation to

His Priesthood, which our adoption bears to His Sonship by nature. We are Priests in the sense that we must be animated by the same principles which pervaded His offering, and that we must really express them in outward works, in the full intensity of which they are susceptible in our hearts. Our Priesthood differs from His, in the circumstance that our offerings are only expressions of our principles, and have no judicial value in the expiation of guilt; and by the other circumstance that, as we have no jurisdiction of ourselves, they possess no absolute merit. We can neither redeem others nor arrogate praise to our own persons. In other respects there is a full and striking correspondence betwixt the Priesthood of the Church and the Priesthood of Jesus. As He was, so are His disciples in the world.

1. That supreme reverence for the glory of God which prompted Jesus to regard not His life dear unto Him, provided His Father's honour were maintained, must be the dominant principle of action in every Christian heart. The Divine character must be sacred in our eyes. The jealousy which the prophet Elijah expressed for the Lord God of Hosts, which Paul felt when he beheld the Athenians devoted to superstition, is no transient sentiment of extraordinary zeal, nor sudden ebullition of romantic impulse,—it is the steady, settled, pervading principle of the Christian life. To be a Christian is to love God, and to love God is to reverence His name. In proportion to the intensity of this principle will be our efforts to vindicate the Divine Honour from reproach. We hate sin not merely because its consequences are disastrous, or its forms repugnant to our tastes and sensibilities, but because it is a reflection upon God. In all its exhibitions it is essentially enmity against Him, but there are manifestations of it which assume the distinctive character of a libel upon His name. Idolatry, superstition, Socinianism, all the types of paganism, do not more conclusively demonstrate that man is by nature a religious being, than they demonstrate that the carnal mind is enmity against God. The abominations of the gentile world are not the crude rites of a people, as many philosophers would have us believe, adapted to the infancy of human knowledge, expressing the natural sentiments of piety and reverence in a form as yet imperfectly developed, and promoting the education of the race in larger and juster views. They are not tendencies towards God in the direction of a proper worship. They are not the feeble and obscure utterances of childhood, sincere and honest, but uninstructed. They are not the results of involuntary ignorance. On the contrary, they are stages of degradation which men have successively reached in their apostasy from God—they are the utterances of alienated hearts—the slanders of malignant and poisoned tongues. The Heavens

declare God's glory and the firmament showeth His handiwork—the invisible things of Him are clearly seen, even His eternal power and Godhead being understood by the things that are made. Creation and Providence, the structure and laws of our own souls proclaim His being, His attributes and His will—so that men are without excuse. There are radical principles in the mind, which, if cherished and developed according to their proper tendencies, would rebuke the errors of the heathen; so that they may be said to know God, as possessing the germs of that knowledge in the constituent elements of reason. The real difficulty is their reluctance to glorify His name. Hence they become vain in their imaginations, suppress the light of nature, and their foolish heart is darkened. Hence it is that they have changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things. Hence it is that they have changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. This is the natural history of paganism. When the Christian man contemplates this spectacle—when he rises to some mount of vision and passes in review before him the heathen and anti-christian tribes of earth—when he hears one unbroken voice of blasphemy and slander ascending from every tongue against that name which angels pronounce with awe, is there no sentiment of indignation, no spirit of zeal for the Lord God of Hosts? Can we hear our God traduced and reviled, and yet hold our peace? Can we witness unceasing libels on His character, and yet take no step to vindicate His injured honour? Can we pretend to have the spirit of our Master, who was clad with zeal as a cloak, when we can gaze unmoved upon the abominations of a world lying in wickedness, which have been introduced by the arch-enemy of God in order to insult and reproach Him? Oh! tell it not in Gath, publish it not in Ashkelon! Your national banner is insulted; your blood boils in your veins, and you cannot rest until the wrong has been repaired. Your earthly friend is reviled in your presence; you would scorn yourself if you could submit with patience. But all wrongs are tolerable, provided it is only God who is their object! You must not tarnish my country's name, you must not reproach my patron nor my friend, you must taint with infamy no earthly object that I love or prize—but God, the God who made me, the God who redeemed me, the God who keeps me, whose air I breathe, whose earth I walk, and whose Heaven I hope to gain—why upon him you may trample and pour contempt, with nothing to fear from me! Is this the Christian spirit? Is this the spirit which brought Jesus from the skies and nailed

Him to the cross? Is this the *love* which we bear to our Father's name? Oh! no, nō. Our souls are stirred within us, stirred to their very depths, when we behold a world joined in conspiracy to darken the glory of God. Our bowels are moved, the fire burns within, and we must speak.

But you object that these reproaches cannot injure the Almighty nor disturb the eternal tranquillity of His throne. Why then be so concerned about them? Simply because they are lies and frauds. They traduce His character, and withhold from Him His due. Is your indignation against theft measured exclusively by the injury which the party may sustain in the loss of property? your abhorrence of scandal founded alone upon the probability of its success? Is this the secret of your zeal for the honour of your friend? Is there no sense of right, no sense of justice, no sense of truth? Is there no such thing as an honest desire that the truth should be known because it is the truth? Has a miserable utilitarian philosophy exploded from amongst us the first principles of morals? God is glorious: the Christian man knows it, and he wants all the world to know it; and his anxiety to spread the truth is in proportion to the enormity of the lie which is supplanting it. The Christian man loves God, and loves Him with all his heart, mind, soul and strength; and the spontaneous dictate of love is to maintain the rights, and vindicate the worth of the object to which it is directed. The more completely undisturbed the Divine Throne is by the calumnies of sin, the more eager is the impulse to set the truth before the nations of the earth; because the more undisturbed it is, the more flagrant is the falsehood, the deeper is the shame.

My brethren, this motive is no visionary thing. It has animated the people of God in all ages and under all dispensations of religion; and if we are not sensible of its ascendancy in our own hearts, we have reason to question whether we are fit for that communion in which Moses is found, who ground the calf to powder; Elijah, who destroyed the prophets of Baal; and Paul and Barnabas, who were shocked at the proposal to pay them Divine honours. We have reason to distrust our sympathy with Him who made his soul an offering for sin, in the spirit of intense adoration of the holiness of God. Our zeal can never be put to any such test as that of our Master. We are not required to expiate guilt. All that is demanded of us is to speak. We are not to energize commensurately with that holiness—we are only to proclaim it, and to proclaim Him in whom it has been conspicuously displayed. Let us look at His work and then at ours, and can we, for very shame, settle down in indifference?

2. The form which our zeal for the Divine glory is to take, that is, the works to which we should be impelled by it, are determined by the influence of the other motive which entered into the sacrifice of Christ.

We do not belong to a dispensation which calls down fire from Heaven to avenge the impieties of earth. The Son might have maintained His Father's honour by consigning our race to perdition. But pity moved His heart; and while he was indignant at the sins and wickedness of man, He pitied his miseries, His bowels of compassion were moved, and the universe beheld with rapture and astonishment the matchless scheme of grace. This sentiment of pity for the guilty and the miserable, He has embedded in the hearts of His people. He has cast them in the mould of His own tenderness, and their bowels yearn over a fallen world. They ascend the mount of vision, as Jesus from Olivet surveyed Jerusalem; and the spectacle which they behold of misery, degradation and death—the fiends of darkness brooding over guilty and infatuated nations, and the curse of God settling upon their souls, moves them to tears, as the approaching ruin of the holy city moved their Master before them.

Wherever they turn their eyes, sin and death present their hideous shapes. Every gradation of wretchedness, from the lethargy and insensibility of stolid ignorance, to the anxious apprehensions and agonizing fears of awakened consciences, seeking a delusive peace in the rites and tortures of will-worship and superstition, is seen on every hand. Darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people. Without God they are yet seeking Him—misled by their carnal minds they can never find Him. They must lie down in sorrow. There is a light which can dispel this darkness, but it has never yet appeared in their hemisphere. There is a name which can heal this sorrow, but it has never yet been pronounced in their dialects. Is there nothing in this spectacle of a world in ruins to stir the compassions of the Christian heart? Can we look upon our fellows, members of the same family, pregnant with the same instincts and destined to the same immortality, and feel no concern for the awful prospect before them? They are perishing, and we have the bread of life—they are famished with thirst, and we have the water of which if a man drink he shall never thirst—they are dead, and we have the spirit of life. We have but to announce our Saviour's name—to spread the story of the cross, and we open the door of hope to the multitudes that are perishing for lack of knowledge. The secret of their misery is sin, and nothing can do them effectual good but that blood, offered through the Eternal Spirit, which purges the conscience and destroys the dominion of this monster. We have but to erect the cross, and the millions who are dying from the stings of the fiery serpent, may look and live! Was there ever such an appeal to the charities of man—a dying world stretching out its arms and imploring by the mute eloquence of its miseries our sympathy and aid?

When the cry of starving Ireland came to our shores, the nation rose as one man, and by a noble and generous impulse interposed to arrest, without delay, the progress of the destroyer. The sufferers were bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, they were our brothers in humanity: that was enough, we gave them the bread which their own soil had denied to them. When the pestilence was spreading its raven wings over the Southern cities of our own land, their brethren at a distance felt it a privilege to relieve their distresses by their sympathy, their assistance, and their alms. It was a just tribute to our common nature. But, my brethren, what was the famine in Ireland, what the plague in Charleston and Savannah, Portsmouth and Norfolk, compared with that famine under which nations are starving—that plague under which nations are dying? And if the call of earthly wretchedness cannot be disregarded without renouncing that humanity which binds us to our fellow men, what shall be said of him who refuses to extend a helping hand, or even to entertain a sympathizing wish, for those who are rushing blindly and hopelessly into the thick darkness of the second death? Shall we call him a man? Can we, dare we call him a Christian man? Can he stand beneath the cross, and be warmed by the blood which flows there, can he be joined to the heart which bleeds there, and enter into the prayer which is breathed there, and turn away unmoved from the spiritual miseries of his kind? Is this to imitate Jesus? I shall not insult your understandings by a categorical answer to the question. I shall not doubt the authenticity of the scenes of Gethsemane and Calvary. The truth is, the apathy of the Christian Church to the condition of the heathen can only be explained by the supposition of a lurking scepticism in regard to the perils of their state. There is a secret feeling, where there is not a developed conviction, that, after all, they shall not surely die. This plea may extenuate but does not justify the neglect of the Church, for it only extenuates, without destroying, the miseries of the heathen. The appeal to our principles as Christians, our love for God and our pity for our fellows, is still mighty from the present injuries which idolatry and superstition are endeavouring to heap on the character of God, and from the present sorrows which paganism entails upon its votaries. These are evils which, with minds and hearts properly tempered, we could not tolerate a moment longer than we were destitute of power to relieve them. We do not turn away from our suffering brother, who is helpless with disease, because we are persuaded that after all he shall not die. We minister to his present wants. We do not hold our peace when the name of a dear one is reviled because we are convinced

that in the course of time his reputation shall come forth like the sun. And so, even if we had Scriptural warrant for the impression that the benefits of redemption may, in some way, be mysteriously imparted to the heathen, yet we could not behold their attitude to God, and the manifold calamities of their ignorance, without feeling our pity and philanthropy equally impelled to dispel their darkness at once. But the appeal should be irresistible upon the supposition, which is the only one the Scriptures warrant, that they who are destitute of the external means are also destitute of the internal dispensation of grace—that they who are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, are also without Christ; and because without Christ, without God, and without hope in the world.

If there is any force in the figure so often recurring in the Scriptures, it were as idle to expect a crop from a soil in which no seed had been deposited, as to expect the fruits of the Spirit where the Word had not been disseminated. That is the instrument of grace and holiness. To say that the heathen can be saved irrespective of the work of Christ, is to renounce the whole doctrine of atonement, and to pour contempt upon that very zeal for the holiness of God which lies at the foundation of the Saviour's sacrifice. To suppose that the benefits of redemption can be imparted where the knowledge of redemption is not found, is to violate all the analogies of providence, and to contradict the express teachings of Revelation. But granting that, by a provision analogous to that which extends redemption to infants, those who are most diligent in improving the light of nature are led by the Spirit, and are in a state of salvation, the number, upon the most charitable estimate, is so small, that it hardly deserves to be taken into the account in considering the prospects of the heathen world. It would create, at best, only a possibility of salvation, while the overwhelming likelihood would remain that hardly one in millions would avail himself of it. The appeal to our sympathies is scarcely affected. The call is almost as loud as it was before. There is no excuse for our apathy and indifference. The spirit of our Master is the spirit of compassion upon the weak and ignorant, and them that are out of the way. We must preach good tidings to the meek, we must bind up the broken-hearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.

But such darkness as that which enshrouds the heathen world, requires a stronger light than the glimmering of a feeble star. The day spring from on high must visit them, the sun of righteousness must arise with healing in his wings. The good Samaritan cannot pass by on the other side and

leave the wounded traveller to the chances of help, he must alight and put him on his own beast, conduct him to the inn, and make provision for his wants. We cannot slight the miseries of so many millions of mankind, and quiet our consciences with the vague plea that their case may not be desperate. We know that they are diseased and that we have a remedy, and we do not know that they can be healed without it. We know that there is salvation in the sound of the Gospel; we do not know that there can be salvation where the silver trumpet is not blown. There is certainty on one side, there is no certainty on the other. Who can hesitate as to what the priestly office of the Church involves in such an aspect of the case? How can we explain the strange infatuation of the people of God? There is a spectacle before us of misery, and degradation, and ruin, compared with which the decay of States and empires is but the small dust of the balance. A wail comes up from the regions of superstition, idolatry and error, deep and terrible as that which brought our Master from the skies. Millions upon millions plunging into perdition, and we turn unmoved away, because without Scripture, analogy or experience, we have fancied to ourselves that here and there a chance individual may be saved. We harden our hearts and steel our sensibilities, and yet dare to lay the flattering unction to our souls, that we are the disciples of Him who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich. Nevertheless the declaration of God standeth sure: "Whoso hath this world's goods and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" If you cannot refuse a cup of cold water without renouncing your title to Christ, how, oh how, can you refuse the glorious gospel of the blessed God?

3. The love to God and the compassion to man, which reigned in the Saviour's breast, were not permitted to evaporate in sentiment or to expire in transient desires; they were active and operative principles, expressing themselves in a work which exemplified all their intensity, which tried His allegiance to them, and which was really a sacrifice from the cost to Him and the benefit to others. We can make no expiation for guilt. Our piety and philanthropy are not to operate in this way. But we are required to evince the truth and sincerity of our principles by labours which shall really express them, and which, in what shall be the cost to us, shall be images of the sacrifice of our Master. Those works which put our integrity to the trial, are the offerings which as Priests, we are bound to render unto God. As the dispensation of the Gospel is founded in a real sacrifice, all its duties are stamped with the spirit of sacrifice. The whole

Christian life is a sacrifice; the man must present himself to God as a living sacrifice, and with himself he must give all that pertains to him. The law of sacrifice is consequently the law of Christian effort. The first condition of discipleship is to deny ourselves. We must tread in the footsteps of the Master. Our sacrifices must be presented in the same spirit and with the same motives as His—they differ in their nature, their efficacy, and their ends.

As Jesus by His sacrifice purchased redemption, we, by ours, must make it known; and as there were difficulties which He had to remove, before He could bring salvation to our race, so there are difficulties which we have to encounter in spreading it abroad. In these respects His Priesthood and ours are strikingly analogous; and it is to give us the opportunity of showing that we are imbued with the same mind which was also in Him, that so many obstacles have to be surmounted in the work of the world's conversion. It would be contrary to the whole analogy of our religion, contrary to the very genius and constitution of Christianity, to suppose that those whose life has sprung from death, whose holiness is repentance, whose great business is to die, should be remitted to indolence and ease. They are called to sacrifice. Hence it does not stagger my faith to be told of the magnitude of the enterprise and the comparative inefficiency of the means, to be reminded of the obstinate and bitter prejudices which must be subdued—the fierce opposition which must be allayed—the cruel persecutions which must be endured. It moves me nothing to point me to the long and patient preparation which must fit the missionary for his work, the inclemency of climates, the low and disgusting customs and rites of heathen nations. All these and a thousand more such obstructions, are only proofs that the Church must tread in the footsteps of her Master, and bless the nations by the sacrifice of her own ease and life. These are only proofs that we have ample and glorious opportunities of attesting to angels and to men, that we are really consecrated to a royal Priesthood, and have the materials for princely offerings. I take fresh courage as larger views of the dignity and grandeur of the trust break in upon my soul. The magnitude of the danger illustrates the spirit of the hero. As the whole earthly existence of man is modified by its relations to the cross, that cross has impressed its type upon our whole earthly being, so that nothing great or good, whether in providence or grace, can be achieved without sacrifice. The law of our whole state is, life out of death. Learning is the fruit of sacrifice; power is the purchase of sacrifice; character is the result of many and severe sacrifices; liberty comes from sacrifice; and look where

you may, you will find nothing that deserves to be called a good, that has not cost labour, or tears, or blood. The only way to gain life is to lose it. This is preëminently true in the sphere of our religion. We are born into the kingdom with pains and throes ; we live there in much tribulation. We begin in a conflict, we continue in a conflict, and the conflict never ceases until the crown is put upon our heads. No marvel, then, that our outward labours for Christ should call for the crucifixion of the flesh. We should have reason to doubt their genuineness as Christian works, if they involved no test of our principles, if they required no agony, or tears or blood. In the very difficulties of the world's conversion we see the tokens of our Father's will. These are the signs that we are called to undertake it ; we should rejoice that we have the opportunity of showing our love to our Master's name, and our charity for our fallen race. These are the crosses which precede the crown, the tribulations through which we pass into glory. If we would reign with Jesus we must also suffer with Him ; if we would sit on His right hand or on His left, or what suits us better, at His feet, in His kingdom, we must be baptized with the baptism that He was baptized with, and drink of the cup that He drank of.

I think it of great importance that this peculiarity of our work should be understood. The whole course of reasoning by which many pacify their consciences, while neglecting the only enterprise in which they can acquit themselves as Priests before God, is founded upon a radical misconception of the nature of their calling. They expect the mountains to be levelled, the valleys to be elevated, the rough places made smooth, before they herald the advent of their Lord ; whereas this is the very labour by which they are required to prepare His way. This is the very work which His church must do. She must cast up the high-way for the progress of the Gospel by her own efforts, self-denial and prayer. She has no questions to ask, but what is the will of the Lord ; that being known, to be deterred by difficulties is to renounce her faith, and to withhold her sacrifices is to be unworthy of the office to which her Lord has commissioned her. The full and distinct recognition of the truth which I have been endeavouring to present is, it seems to me, all that is necessary to awaken the energies of God's people upon a scale of grandeur which the world has never witnessed before. We have great resources in means and men, in piety, learning, talent and wealth. The world is open before us. Commerce and war have broken down the barriers of centuries, and the rapid and constant intercourse of the nations has brought the heathen to our door. The ships are waiting in

port to bear the heralds of salvation to the ends of the earth. The American Eagle and the British Lion are prepared to accompany and protect them, wherever they may choose to pitch their tents. The harvest is ripe for the sickle, or, to change the figure, the altar is ready for the sacrifice—the materials are all waiting to be offered, nothing, nothing is wanting but the spirit in the Priest to avail himself of the golden opportunity. Let the Church comprehend her calling, let her comprehend the times, and there would be presented to God an oblation which would soon change the aspect of the world. We should soon be found rejoicing in sacrifices. The father would bring his son with delight and offer him upon the altar of God. The rich would bring their wealth, the wise their learning, the great their power, the poor their prayers, all would have something to testify their zeal for God and their sympathy for man. Commerce would consecrate its ships, and war its victories. Soon the name of Jesus would be found in every dialect under Heaven. The spirit of sacrifice is all that we want—the offering lies at the door. And, my brethren, can we endure the shame when God calls us by His Providence, and commands us in His word to undertake this work, specifically in the light of a sacrifice, in order that in doing it we may imitate Him who prepared us for it by a sacrifice which cost Him His life? Can we endure the shame, the deep damnation of our indolence and love of ease, our cowardice and idleness, if we decline to bind the victim with the cords of our love to the horns of the altar? Shall we be deterred by the prospect of self-denial? Who is so base that he would let a nation perish rather than forego some little pleasure or encounter a little pain? Who so mean that for his own personal and private ends he would be content that the earth should be covered with darkness? But your children are dear, and you cannot give them up; you cannot renounce for them the prospects of wealth, and influence, and fame; you must keep them at home though continents join with the isles in imploring your aid. What would you think of this plea if your country should call to arms? Could you find capacity in your souls large enough for despising the man who could hold back his sons, when patriotism was mustering its hosts for the conflict? At your country's call you would gladly give up all. And is there no magic in the call of Jesus? Under your country's banners you would renounce your homes, your wives and lands, you would endure hardships as good soldiers, and rejoice in them the more, the severer they were—the cold ground, the open air, bogs and marshes, disease, and hunger, and thirst, all this would be sweet to you if it added to your

country's glory. And is there nothing in the glory of Jesus, nothing in attachment to that country, of which you hope to be immortal citizens, nothing in the great interests of the human soul, to stir up your energies and to nerve your resolutions? And are you disciples of Jesus? Can you stand beneath the cross, can you behold the lamb there slain, the blood there poured out like water; can you listen to the cry of agony and feel the shaking earth, and shudder at the darkened heavens, and then talk of *your* sacrifices for that Saviour? Shame, shame, if we draw back in the service of such a Lord. No, no, my brethren, let us gird ourselves for the sacrifices, let us rejoice in making them. They are but shadows after all, mere emblems and images—the *true sacrifice* was made on Calvary. The way has been broken up, the breaker has gone before us; let us follow in His tracks, we shall know them by the blood. Let us put our hands in His and bid an eternal farewell to all parleys with flesh and blood.

4. And, as there was a joy set before Jesus, for which He endured the cross, despising the shame, so there is a glorious recompense of reward attached to our sacrifices and labours of love. We are not required to spend our strength for nought, nor to waste our energies upon a bootless scheme. The reward of Jesus was won upon the strictest principles of right. He deserved the glory with which for His sacrifice He was crowned. The reward, in our case, is exclusively of grace. We can never be other than unprofitable servants; but God, in infinite goodness, measures the expressions of His favour by the intensity with which we have manifested the spirit of allegiance to Him. All He asks is, that the heart should be in the service; and any effort that really proceeds from love to His name, and charity to the race, will never be overlooked nor forgotten. A cup of cold water ministered in the spirit and for the sake of Christ, is a treasure laid up in Heaven. The moral significance of our actions depends upon the degree and severity of the sacrifice. What costs us little means little. It is not the external splendour of the deed, it is the spirit in which it is performed, and the self-denial it involves, that determines its value in the sight of God. If vanity, ostentation, or secular motives have prompted it, if it have sprung from a mercenary spirit, and is presented as a price for the Divine favour, if its asceticism and self-denial are regarded as pleas of merit and occasions of self-gratulation and applause, the water is polluted at the fountain—the victim is blemished, it is the halt and the lame that are presented on the altar. The act must proceed from love, be a cheerful and voluntary expression of love, and vindicate its own sincerity by its cost to the

flesh. When these conditions meet, there is a reward which becomes the more glorious the less we feel it to be deserved, a reward compared with which the poor satisfaction we obtain in the carnal indulgences which we spare in refusing to make sacrifices, deserves not to be named. This reward is twofold—it is the reward of success here and glory hereafter. The first is not sufficiently understood, nor the latter sufficiently contemplated. I have no hesitation in laying down the proposition that no real sacrifice of the Christian heart is ever lost, even in this world. If it is an exercise of some personal grace, the exercise strengthens the habit and improves the principle of grace in general. If it is an effort for the external kingdom of Christ, it enters as a link in the chain of Providence, and contributes its part to the final consummation. Works of grace are as immortal as grace itself—they can never perish. As the sacrifice of Christ, the great High Priest, was infallibly accepted, so the real sacrifices of all whom He has consecrated Priests, must be as really accepted, and as really secure, in the way of means, the blessings to which they were directed. Our labours for the conversion of the world, as far as they are spiritual sacrifices, must be crowned with success. What now hinders the result, is that there is so little sacrifice for it. We pray—but what is there of agony in our prayers? Who wrestles with God? Whose soul is burdened with the weight of a perishing world, or who takes an hour from his sleep or foregoes a single meal, in order that he might plead the cause of the millions upon millions that know not God? And are such prayers *sacrifices*—are they more than breath; and can there be any wonder that mere breath should not move the Lord of Hosts? What was the spirit in which Christ prayed, when He made His soul an offering for sin? Again we give: But who, like the widow, gives all his living, who denies himself one luxury, or refuses one indulgence, that he might have the means of contributing more to the cause of the Redeemer? How many give only what they think they will not miss! How many professedly adjust their contributions by the principle, that God is entitled only to what they do not want; and accordingly treat His kingdom as they would treat a beggar who supplicates for alms at the door! Are such gifts sacrifices, and is it any wonder that they should stink in the nostrils of the Lord of Hosts? He is no pensioner upon our bounty; the cattle upon a thousand hills are His, and what He requires is some proof that we recognize His right, His supreme and absolute right, to us and ours. We are not first, and then the Lord to have what we can spare. He is first, and we are to have what He may allow for our sustenance and comfort. If these things

are so, it is painfully obvious that the Church collectively is not animated with the spirit of its Priesthood—it makes no sacrifices for the heathen world, it detains the victims from the altar, and the darkness continues to cover the earth and gross darkness the people. The few who here and there are awake to their responsibilities, and are struggling to do their duty, will find in the issue that their work has not been in vain. Every prayer has told, every contribution has told, every missionary has told, every martyr death has told, all have entered into the complicated web of Providence, and all have aided in bringing about the accomplishment of the eternal purposes of God. And when the whole Church shall comprehend the nature of her calling, and summon her energies to make the sacrifice which God exacts at her hands, the period will soon revolve in which sacrifices will give place to praise and trials to glory.

Those who are embarked in the work should not be discouraged because there are not symptoms of immediate success.

As in the discoveries of science, according to the observation of Whewell, so in every great enterprise, there are always three stages, the prelude, the pursuit, the triumph. The prelude is mainly a work of preparation. It is the mustering of forces, the collection and distribution of means, the marshalling of the hosts for the impending conflict. This stage, in the missionary work, consists in efforts to awaken interest, to arouse the dormant energies of the Church, and to bring it to a full apprehension of its duty and the magnitude and extent of the task to be performed. In the pursuit, the battle is joined: and, as in the ardour of the contest, it is often impossible to determine the chances of victory, or to estimate the success of particular evolutions and manœuvres—so, in the great work of missions, while the enterprise is still in progress, in the heat and fervour of the struggle it is hardly possible to comprehend the bearing of particular achievements, or to ascertain the measure of what is actually accomplished. Appearances, for the time, may be doubtful, when, after all, there is a real and steady progress.

While Jesus was engaged in His own peculiar work, as He approached its termination the appearance was anything but encouraging to the minds of His disciples, and the victory was gained at the very hour in which all seemed to be lost. The corn of wheat must lie under the ground and seem to perish, before it can vegetate and bring forth fruit. In this enterprise, therefore, we are not to be disheartened by unpromising appearances. The day of triumph will come, and our defeats and disasters will be the means of advancing it. What we have

to do is to gird ourselves for the fight. The faith of God is pledged for the rest. When we engage in good earnest in the enterprise, offering up the sacrifices of prayers and men and alms, we shall soon see the ensign of the Lord lifted up on high, and the nations flocking to His standard. Victory will perch upon our banners, and the shout will thunder through the temple of God, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ!" Is not this a reward worth striving for? And when you add to it that eternal weight of glory which awaits us in the skies, is there not inducement enough to awake the very dead in labours for the honours of Jesus? My brethren, do we believe in our religion; can we believe in its promises and prospects, and yet be so reluctant to make the sacrifices it requires? What have her labours for the conversion of the world cost the Church collectively? Individuals have suffered, have given themselves and their all as a free-will offering to God. Parents, here and there, have consecrated their children to the work, and God has accepted the gift. Young men and maidens have taken their lives in their hands and become strangers and pilgrims upon earth; and some here to-night have had the distinguished honour of anointing heathen soil with martyr-blood derived from their veins. These are glorious achievements of Grace, and the actors shall flourish in eternal renown. But the Church collectively, what has she suffered for Christ, what has she suffered for the heathen? Where are her sacrifices, where her tears, where the offerings that have cost her dear? What has our Presbyterian Church done worthy of her privileges and resources? How many sacrifices can she count as proofs of her love to God and man? I would not reproach her—with all her faults I love her; and when I cease to love her, may my heart cease to beat. It is because I love her that I would have her love her Lord more; and that I would delight to trace upon her the scars and wounds of many a hard-fought battle in His cause. I would have her foremost in sacrifices as she is foremost in intelligence, purity of doctrine and simplicity of worship.

I have now, brethren, very inadequately, I know, discharged the duty assigned to me. I have taken you to the cross, and discussed this great subject in the light of the arguments and motives derived from it. My appeal has been to Christian principle, Christian faith and Christian love. I have pointed you to your Saviour, and endeavored to illustrate the spirit in which He laid down His life that He might take it again. I have explained the nature of your own spiritual Priesthood, and insisted on the duty, the privilege, the glory of making sacrifices to communicate that salvation which Jesus made His sacrifice to procure. I have appealed

to no selfish, personal, or secular considerations. I have drawn no argument from the sympathies, the vanity, the pride of the natural heart. I have resorted to no tricks of rhetoric, no artifices of logic, to seduce your feelings, and entrap you into conclusions for a momentary effect. I have simply contemplated you as the anointed Priests of the Lord, and have sketched a single department of your work in this high and holy calling. Have I exaggerated aught? Is it so that when our Divine Master had completed His work of sacrifice for the expiation of human guilt, He anointed His followers with His own spirit, and commissioned them to make the sacrifices which should be needed to propagate the Gospel to the ends of the earth? Is it our business to spread, as it was His business to purchase, salvation by *sacrifice*? Is this so? And does not the call of the heathen world come to us with a solemn, momentous, awful emphasis? They are perishing in their sins. True, it is their own guilt which condemns them. Their idolatry, superstition and will-worship, their impurities, crimes and abominations, are all the result of their own voluntary ignorance, the successive steps and indications of a wicked apostasy from God. They are without excuse; and when they stand before the great white throne, every mouth shall be stopped and all the world shall become guilty before God. Their condemnation is just. But are we free from their blood? Have we manifested the love to them which has been manifested to us? We, too, were perishing in our sins, but the Saviour passed by; and when He extended to us the arms of salvation and of mercy, He commanded us to give to others what we had so freely received ourselves. Can we face the Saviour by whose stripes we were healed; can we encounter the rebuke of that eye which melted Peter into penitence and shame, when we confront the dying millions, in reference to whom we must have the agonizing consciousness that we have made no sacrifices for their souls? Who can brook the thought, saved by blood himself, and unwilling to endure a little hardship for the salvation of others? Were it not for all-glorious, matchless grace, it seems to me that the faithless Christian, when he meets the wretched tribes of superstition, for whom he has done nothing that deserves to be counted a sacrifice, would wish to sink into the earth, or be crushed by rocks and mountains, rather than meet that Redeemer who was all sacrifice for Him. He cannot see the scars and wounds and look upon his own unmangled body. The sense of unfaithfulness, of shame, of baseness, of utter meanness, must be excruciating, would be excruciating beyond degree, were it not that the sacrifice which saves also cancels. This very consideration that God forgives us, should make us now

more determined not to forgive ourselves. The destinies of the heathen are, in some measure, intrusted to us: we hold the key of life. We are required to make sacrifices for their souls, and we assume a fearful responsibility in declining to do so. It is a vain plea that the work is too great for us: that we have neither the men nor the means. Have we prayed for the men with an earnestness, intensity and fervour, that may cause our prayers to be denominated sacrifices? Is not this a part of our office? Have we not the means of supporting all that God shall give? Are not our resources abundant, provided the heart were in the work? Have we done what we could? Nations sitting in darkness and the valley of the shadow of death cry to us for light. These nations we have been commissioned to enlighten; and because the work cannot be done with a sigh or a wish, or a little useless treasure that no one would miss, we, the Priests of God, who have been bought with blood, and appointed for self-denial; fold our arms and say they must die. We pity them, we are sorry for them, but it would require too much trouble to do all that their case demands; and we must, therefore, let them perish in their sins. Oh, my God, have mercy upon us! Oh, blessed Saviour, reveal thy love for ruined man, and shed it abroad in our hearts! We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us and we would not hear.

When I consider the magnitude and grandeur of the motives which press upon the Church to undertake the evangelization of the world; when I see that the glory of God, the love of the Saviour, and pity for the lost, all conspire in one great conclusion; when I contemplate our own character and relations as spiritual Priests, and comprehend the dignity, the honour, the tenderness and self-denial of the office, and then reflect upon the indifference, apathy and languor which have seized upon the people of God; when I look to the Heavens above me and the world around me, and hear the call which the wail of perishing millions sends up to the skies, thundered back upon the Church with all the solemnity of a Divine commission; when a world says come, and pleads its miseries; when God says go, and pleads His glory, and Christ repeats the commands, and points to His hands and His feet and His side, it is enough to make the stone cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber to answer it.

If Jesus should stand again upon the Mount of Olives and summon before Him this venerable Court, as He summoned the disciples of His personal Ministry, and the Apostles of His extraordinary call; if He should collect you and me and all the officers and all the people of His Church

on earth, what think you would be the language in which He would address us? It would be an august spectacle—a solemn, an awful scene. The words that He would speak would pierce our souls and stir the very depths of our being. They could never be effaced from the memory. We should think of them by day and dream of them by night; and the most anxious cares of business could never drown them. The voice would ring in our ears wherever we went—at home, in the market, by the way-side, as we lay down and as we rose up. It would be an era in our history never to be forgotten. Is it presumption to imagine what those words would be? Shall we say that He would reproach us? His nature is made of tenderness, His bowels melt with love. His eyes would beam only with pity, but our own hearts would be busy with upbraidings. My brethren, there is no need for any exercise of fancy. He was once present with His collected Church, and He did give her a parting mandate—Go ye into all the world.

Methinks I see Him here to-night, with His hands uplifted to bless us, repeating the same commission to us; and as here present, I cannot restrain the prayer that He would breathe upon us as He did upon the Apostles, that we too might receive the Holy Ghost. With a fresh anointing from Him, we will look upon the world with new eyes and a new heart, and an impulse be given to our efforts which shall never falter nor fail, until the whole earth is filled with the glory of the Lord. Amen, so may it be.

